



# First Steps in Defence

## The Opening Lead

The first card played to the first trick is called the Opening Lead

In no-trump contracts it is good for both declarer and defence to set up length tricks.

The defence has the advantage that it makes the first lead to the first trick.

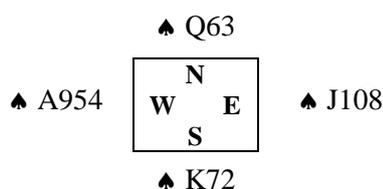
*When defending a no-trump contract lead your longest suit.*

## Which card should we lead? A little card, or an Honour?

1. ♠ AKQ72 When we have both ace and king of a suit we lead the ace. We lead *ace from ace-king*
2. ♥ KQJ83 When we have a *sequence of touching honours* we lead the highest  
 ♣ QJ1064 From king, queen, jack, eight, three we lead the king  
 From queen, jack, ten, six, four we lead the queen.  
We lead top of a sequence.
3. ♦ Q73 When we have one or two honours in a suit, but not a sequence, we lead the 4th highest card  
 ♠ KJ62 From queen, seven, three we lead the three (third highest from 3)  
 From king, jack, six, two we lead the two.  
We lead low from an honour.
4. ♥ 9732 It follows logically that if we lead a middle card (6,7,8 or 9) we have no honour in the suit  
 ♠ 8643 From nine, seven, two we lead the 7, never the 2.  
 From 8643 we lead the 6, never the 3.  
We lead a middle card from a suit with no honours.

**Rules for Leading:** Top of an honour sequence (and from AK)  
 A low card promises an honour, a middle card denies an honour

## ‘Aces Are for Killing Kings’



**South** is declarer and **West** is on lead. This is the spade suit  
 If **West** leads ♠A, **North** plays ♠3 and **South** ♠2,  
 Later **South** makes one trick with ♠Q (♠7 to ♠Q)  
 and one with ♠K (♠6 to ♠K), two spade tricks altogether.  
 But if **West** leads another suit, hanging on to his ♠A, then  
 declarer can make only one spade trick, since ♠A will beat ♠K

The lead of ♠A is not good because it helps declarer rather than the defending side.

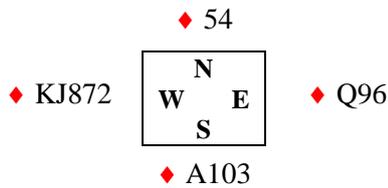
*“Don’t waste an ace”*



# First Steps in Defence

## The Third Hand

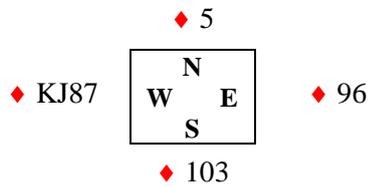
After partner has led, dummy goes down. Declarer plays a card from dummy and it is the turn of Third Hand



Following our earlier advice West leads ♦7, (4<sup>th</sup> highest of his longest suit) against a no-trump contract

On ♦7 North plays ♦4.

Suppose that East plays ♦Q and South wins the trick with ♦A  
That leaves:



Now that ♦A is out of the game, ♦K and ♦J are the highest remaining cards. They will make tricks later when one of the defenders wins a trick in another suit and leads a diamond.

Later, when ♦K and ♦J have won the second and third tricks in diamonds only West has diamonds left, so ♦8 and ♦7 make two more tricks. (They cannot be trumped at no-trump.)

The queen that East played to the first trick played a vital part in taking four diamond tricks.

If East had played a small diamond to the first trick South could win with ♦10, keeping his ace.

Third Hand, East in the example, should play his *highest card* to the first trick.

We call this technique *Third Hand High*

When partner leads a low card, and we have a card higher than the card dummy plays, we play our highest card.

*“Third Hand Does What It Can”*